

096502

THE NARROW CAVES

by

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Titlecard: Upstate New York, 1923

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The spacious bedroom is tastefully decorated for a child. The walls are covered with a colorful striped wallpaper and hand carved paneling and moldings bridge the angles. The window admits a view of a large body of water, the opposite shore of which cannot be seen in the moonlit night.

GREGORY, a slender dark-haired boy of ten lies in bed, staring through the window. He seems troubled. The only audible sound is his own breathing; the only light is the faint blue-green luminance of the moon. He sits upright in his bed.

EXT. PATH WITHIN THE FOREST - SAME

Gregory, wearing pajamas and loafers, walks along the path, his flashlight pointed directly ahead of him. Gnarled roots and fallen branches lie across the path, but Gregory continues forward, either stepping over or around his obstacles.

A sudden CRACK startles Gregory terrifically. He shines his light behind him, upon the path. He sees nothing. He shines it overhead, into the twisted tangle of tree branches. He sees nothing.

Gregory slowly points the light in front of him again and, quivering slightly, continues on.

The light coming from his flashlight gleams upon a pile of large stones, most of which are several feet in diameter.

Gregory hesitates for a brief moment, apprehension seizing him. He forces himself to walk forward, towards the mound.

He shines the light on the looming mass; a hole three feet in diameter lies in the middle of the stones. He shines his light inside; the white light illuminates a passageway that penetrates into rock and earth.

Gregory gets on his hands and knees. Holding his flashlight in one hand, he crawls into the aperture like a three-legged dog.

INT. CAVERN - SAME

Gregory crawls forward. His body shakes with fear and tremendous emotional repression, yet he continues to crawl onward inside the narrow passageway.

He points the light in front of him, but the twisting path of the cavern prevents him from seeing more than two or three yards ahead.

The pathway begins to grow both taller and wider. Gregory stands, though hunched slightly, and pursues his course. Gradually he is able to stand fully upright in the passage.

Gregory turns a nearly perpendicular corner, shining his light into the unknown.

A MAN stands facing him, watching.

Gregory is frozen for a moment; the flashlight shakes in his hand.

The Man is at least fifty years old and his torn clothing and entire body are covered with dirt and sweat; he has a grisly beard, broken teeth and cracked finger nails. He holds a small oil lamp in his hand.

The Man looks at Gregory for a long moment, not saying anything.

Gregory switches off his flashlight and places it upon the ground.

Illuminated by the Man's lantern, Gregory reaches into his left pajama pocket and withdraws the small leather pouch.

The Man's eyes do not leave Gregory's face.

Gregory extends his arm as far as it will go, but does not take a step forward; the bag sways in the air. The Man places the lantern on the floor.

The Man slowly grabs the pouch. He loosens the tiny leather string that holds the pouch shut.

He dumps the contents onto the floor. Earrings, a string of pearls, and three rings fall to the ground near the lantern.

The Man looks at the jewelry, with an unreadable expression.

GREGORY

Where's my dog?

Gregory reaches into his right pocket; he withdraws his pocket knife. His hands tremble violently as he unfolds the three inch blade.

The man looks Gregory in the eyes. Gregory, losing his resolve, closes the blade and shoves it back into his pocket.

The man hands Gregory a folded sheet of paper. Gregory opens it up and looks at it. He shines the light on it and reads.

GREGORY
(continuing)
But she hasn't got anymore.

The man looks at Gregory.

GREGORY
(continuing)
I just want my dog.

The man turns and walks away.

Gregory begins to CRY; mucus drips from his nose while his shoulders heave uncontrollably.

The man returns pulling a dog on a leash. The dog is a small black terrier; its mouth has been tied shut by burlap twine. The dog whimpers faintly.

GREGORY
(continuing)
You promised you'd give-

The man abruptly jerks the leash, toppling the small canine. Gregory SCREAMS and then lunges forward to protect his dog.

The Man shoves Gregory forcefully, sending him backwards into the cave wall. The dog continues to cough, whine and whimper. Gregory collapses and SOBS.

The Man picks up the piece of paper he handed to Gregory a moment ago. He places it back in Gregory's tear-moistened hands.

Gregory reads the note again: "Get all of your parents' nice things and bring them here. If you tell anyone about me I will kill your dog and burn down your house."

The dog whines on the floor, spasmodically pawing at the cavern wall and whimpering.

The man scoops up the jewels with a leathery hand and stuffs them in the front pocket of his filth-encrusted pants. The Man picks up the dog with one hand and the lamp with the other and departs further into the cavern.

Gregory, red-faced from crying and distressed beyond words, picks up his flashlight and hurriedly retraces his path.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family sits at the large table underneath a large chandelier, eating their meal. Gregory's father, GUNTHER, is a well built silver-haired man in his early forties; Gregory's mother, SYLVIA, is a slender woman with pronounced yet appealing features. Nobody looks happy.

GUNTHER

I refuse to believe it - she has worked for us for nearly twelve years.

SYLVIA

Who else could have taken it other than the maid?

Gunther does not answer. He cuts at a large piece of beef on his plate, yet he does not eat it. He looks at his son.

GUNTHER

You promise that you did not go into your mother's vanity?

GREGORY

(defensively)

I told you...I didn't.

Gunther stares at his son and then redirects his gaze to his wife.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gregory sits up in the bed in his darkened room. He pulls his pillow from his pillowcase and unzips it. He reaches into the feathers and withdraws a golden necklace and two sterling bracelets.

INT. PATH WITHIN THE FOREST - NIGHT

Gregory walks along the path, pointing his flashlight before him. He steps over a twisted branch that lies in his way.

INT. CAVERN - LATER

Gregory crawls along the cavern tunnel on two knees and one hand.

His other hand points a flashlight ahead of him as he crawls. Irregular shadows glide across the walls as the flashlight's beam plays upon the cavern's jagged surfaces.

Gregory COUGHS as he inhales some dust, yet he pushes onward, unrelentingly.

Gregory crawls into a portion of the cavern where the ceiling is higher, and gradually he is able to walk with a slight hunch.

As he reaches a space where he can stand upright, he comes upon a perpendicular corner. He rounds the sharp, right-angled turn.

He enters the space where he met the Man the previous evening. He looks around for a moment, but sees no signs of the Man.

Gregory walks forward, stumbling upon an unseen obstacle.

He points his light down; the prostrate body of the Man lies before him. The Man's mouth is wide open and his shining eyes stare up at the ceiling of the cavern. He is dead.

Gregory's eyes wander across the Man's body before him.

The Man's eyes are dark red with blood; purple arteries and veins are clearly visible along his face and neck. His hands and fingers have been crushed into unrecognizable shapes.

Gregory turns and runs, momentarily unable to breathe from his terror.

Several yards later, during his flight, Gregory catches his breath and begins YELLING.

CUT TO BLACK

Titlecard: 1981, Central Florida

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

More than a dozen cars are parked in the driveway, on the lawn, and alongside the road in front of a somewhat run-down looking house.

PARTYGOERS barely out of their teens roam the front yard with drinks in their hands- predominantly silver cans of beer- and cigarettes trailing smoke.

On the deck of the front porch, behind two enormous speakers and a record player, sits a DISC JOCKEY. He is 22, thin, and has long blond hair that is feathered back and parted in the middle.

A bright orange extension cord runs from his console through a cracked window and into the house. He is not playing any music.

A young woman with PIGTAILS and denim overalls walks up to the DJ.

PIGTAILS

Why aren't you playing anything?

DJ

It's too early.

PIGTAILS

It's midnight.

DJ

(dismissive)

Too early.

PIGTAILS

(coquettishly)

Would you play something if I requested it?

DJ

I guarantee that I wouldn't.

PIGTAILS

Come on man- let me tell you what I want to hear.

DJ

If I own the record, I'll break it right in front of your face.

A yellow station wagon pulls onto the lawn. The DJ looks at the car momentarily. Pigtailes looks perplexed.

PIGTAILS

You're a jerk.

Pigtailes walks away.

Both front doors and one rear door of the station wagon swing open; the three occupants step outside.

The driver is WALTER, a young white man of 21 with moppish sandy hair, bushy sideburns, a medium build and an amicable air. The front passenger is JASON, a wiry, high strung 21-year-old Asian; the rear passenger is ANTHONY, a twenty year-old wearing a baseball uniform.

They shut their doors and stride towards the front porch.

JASON

I hope they have beer.

ANTHONY

We think alike.

As the trio reaches the porch, Walter waves to the DJ and gives him a thumbs-up.

WALTER

Nice to see you man.

DJ

Walter. This is a surprise.

Walter grins and points to his two companions.

WALTER

These guys needed a lift.

(shrugs)

I wasn't doin' anything anyways.

JASON

(to Walter)

We're going in.

Walter nods. Jason and Anthony walk through the open door.

DJ

I drove down to South Florida last weekend hunting for rarities. Come by later if you want to browse through my crates.

WALTER

Why aren't you playing anything?

The DJ broadly gestures to the partygoers.

DJ

These people don't deserve it.

Walter gives the DJ a thumbs-up and enters the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Walter walks inside the crowded living room, looking for his companions. Smoke and people obscure his vision as he pushes blindly and awkwardly forward.

WALTER
Excuse me please.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

The hallway is less crowded than the main room, but SEVEN PARTYGOERS stand in line before a white door. Walter walks past them.

BOY IN LINE
(to Walter)
There's a line here.

WALTER
What's it for?

BOY IN LINE
To fuck your mother.

WALTER
Then I should get VIP treatment.

Walter continues down the hall past the line. He sees Jason and Anthony at the end- by a cooler. Jason is holding a silver can of beer in his hand; Anthony looks annoyed.

WALTER
(continuing)
Gentlemen.

JASON
Walter.

ANTHONY
Let's go to the disco-

JASON
(to Anthony)
They're gonna get more beer
soon...just chill out.
(to Walter)
You see that girl with the purple
hair?

WALTER

Pretty?

JASON

She's a fucking freak. You gotta hate your parents to do shit like that.

ANTHONY

Or hate your hair.

Jason nods in agreement and drinks a messy glug of beer, a good percentage of which finds its way onto his shirt.

Walter looks around, obviously not excited about the atmosphere.

EXT. BACK YARD - LATER

A few PEOPLE wander about behind the house in the small patio area surrounding a pool. A COUPLE stands intertwined by the edge of the screening. Several BOYS and one GIRL are swimming.

Walter, now carrying a record beneath his arm, walks outside through a sliding glass door that SCRAPES along its rusted runner. He attempts to shut the door behind him but is only partially successful. He stifles a yawn.

He walks along the patio, looking and feeling like a completely misplaced item. He opens the screen door and steps outside into the ragged and weedy back yard.

He sees a hammock in the distance and walks towards it.

As he approaches the hammock, he recognizes that someone is lying inside of it.

A twenty-two-year-old WOMAN with long black hair and a sharp, concentrated look lies on her side, holding a leather-bound book in front of her.

Walter draws nearer, but she does not seem to notice him.

WOMAN

(not looking up from her
book)

Go away.

WALTER

What are you reading?

WOMAN

Go away.

The Woman looks at Walter for a brief moment with a dark, austere glance before she returns to her book.

Walter stands for a moment, debating whether or not he should continue trying to make conversation. The Woman does not look up from her book.

WALTER

I'm not much of a partygoer.

RUBY

Then it seems unwise to attend a party.

WALTER

So why are you here?

RUBY

I live here - I don't have a choice.

The Woman continues to read.

WALTER

Enjoy your book.

Slightly sadder than he was a moment ago, Walter turns around and walks back to the party.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Walter walks into the crowded kitchen. Several hungry PARTYGOERS pick at nachos which look like the remains of an exploded animal; others contend for the fried chicken, potato chips and pretzels nearby.

Walter looks around the room until he notices a low cabinet below the sink.

Walter circumvents the rapacious cluster, his eyes focused on the cabinet below the sink.

He reaches and opens the cabinet; he places his record inside, behind a turquoise garbage pail.

Walter shuts the cabinet door.

INT. WALTER'S STATION WAGON - LATER

Walter distractedly steers the vehicle while his mind turns over deeper thoughts. Jason watches Walter, suspicious of his ability to navigate the road. Anthony reclines in the back seat, dozing with his mouth wide open.

JASON
Pay attention.

WALTER
I am.

JASON
No you're not.

WALTER
I am.

Walter tightens his grip upon the wheel.

WALTER
(continuing)
Did you go into the backyard at all?

JASON
When that chick with the crazy melons got pushed into the pool I sure did.

WALTER
By any chance did you see a woman reading a book in a hammock?

JASON
I find bookworms less appealing than wet women with obscenely large breasts - I'm sorry.

WALTER
I had a class with her a couple of years ago, I always hoped I'd see her again.

JASON
You talk to her?

WALTER

I tried.

Walter turns on his blinker.

JASON

Not here - it's the next one.

Walter turns off his blinker.

WALTER

I remember having a couple of
dreams about her at the time.

JASON

I like those kind of dreams -
though when you wake up it's a bit
of a mess.

Walter puts his blinker on again.

INT. WALTER'S STATION WAGON - LATE AFTERNOON

Walter, wearing a maroon turtleneck and blue jeans, drives
along a modestly populated country road. His hair is slicked
back neatly and his cheeks shine from his recent shave. He
looks a little nervous.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Walter pulls his car into the driveway of the house where he
attended the party last evening. Beer cans gleam like oblong
stars amidst the weedy front lawn.

Walter stops his vehicle. He inhales deeply and steps out of
his car. He walks towards the front door, determined to be
nonchalant.

Walter KNOCKS on the door several times.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Someone get the door!

WOMAN'S VOICE #2 (O.S.)

Ruby...can you get it? I'm in the
bathroom...

RUBY (O.S.)

Who is it?

WALTER
My name is Walter, I was here last
night at the party.

RUBY (O.S.)
Yes?

WALTER
I left something behind.

The door opens to reveal Ruby, the dark-haired woman from the
hammock.

WALTER
(continuing)
Hello.

Ruby looks at Walter for a moment; her cynical eyes seem less
than friendly.

WALTER
(continuing)
I think I left a record here.

RUBY
Might you remember where you left
it?

WALTER
I'm not sure. Can I have a look
around?

RUBY
You can leave your name and
telephone number. If I come across
it, I'll ring you.

WALTER
That's very thoughtful of you.

RUBY
Come inside - I'll get a pen and a
pad.

Walter enters the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

The room has been cleaned up since the previous night. Walter
walks behind Ruby, thinking about how he should proceed.

Ruby pulls a small pad of paper and a pen from a tabletop. She hands them to Walter, who takes them thankfully.

Walter begins to write on the pad.

Ruby pulls the bag out of the garbage pail; Walter looks up at her.

WALTER
(continuing)
What were you reading last night?

RUBY
A book.

WALTER
What kind?

RUBY
The kind with words.

WALTER
What's it about?

RUBY
It's about men who mind their own business.

WALTER
You don't have to be obtuse.

RUBY
You shouldn't pry.

WALTER
I was just curious.

RUBY
Why is that?

Walter takes a moment to decide whether he should show his cards.

WALTER
I had an anthropology course with you a few semesters ago. You asked such intelligent questions...I wanted to talk to you then, but I didn't.

RUBY
I remember the course, but I don't
remember you.

WALTER
I'm sure you don't.
(beat)
When I saw you last night- away
from everyone else...

RUBY
Look, I'm not interested in seeing
anybody, alright?

Walter nods, saddened.

RUBY
(continuing)
Did you actually leave something
here?

With a hint of anger, Walter tears the top sheet off of the
pad and CRUMPLES it in his fist. He stands up and walks
towards the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Walter walks inside, heading for the cabinet. Ruby follows,
annoyed.

He opens up the cabinet and withdraws the record from behind
the turquoise pail. He looks Ruby straight in the eye, with
obvious disdain.

WALTER
I apologize for being interested.

Walter tosses the crumpled paper into the trash and walks out
of the kitchen.

INT. WALTER'S STATION WAGON - MOMENTS LATER

Walter backs his car out of the driveway. He reaches the
road and drives away, without looking back.

INT. COMMON ROOM OF WALTER, JASON, AND ANTHONY - TWILIGHT

Walter enters the messy, messy living room area. Newspapers,
pizza boxes, soda cans, beer cans, and miscellaneous
unidentifiabes are evidence that none of the roommates clean
this room.

A large sofa missing a cushion and covered with a stained plaid sheet is the room's centerpiece. Walter looks around the room, perhaps noticing exactly how objectionably filthy it is for the very first time.

Jason walks in wearing shorts and flip-flops only; he is nibbling on a piece of cold pizza.

WALTER

This place is an absolute disaster.

JASON

Sure is.

WALTER

Have you ever thought about cleaning it?

JASON

I've thought about you cleaning it.

Jason tosses his pizza crust on top of a pile of newspapers. Walter looks at the crust with distaste.

WALTER

We might want to get a garbage can.

JASON

Someday.

Walter sees a piece of paper taped to his door. Walter reads it. A smile brightens his face.

Walter walks over to a different bedroom door. He KNOCKS.

ANTHONY (O.S.)

I'm sleeping!

WALTER

When did she call?

ANTHONY (O.S.)

Top of the fifth inning...during a commercial.

WALTER

Thanks.

EXT. (RUBY'S) HOUSE - TWILIGHT

Walter's yellow station wagon CRUNCHES upon the gravel as it almost apprehensively rolls towards the front door.

The car stops. Walter inhales deeply in an effort to calm himself. He exhales.

He exits the car, shuts the door and walks towards the front of the house, more confident with every step.

Walter is wearing blue jeans and a brown sweater.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

RUBY'S VOICE (O.S.)

One moment.

Walter quietly clears his throat a couple of times.

The door opens. Ruby stands opposite Walter, dressed in a formal black dress.

WALTER

Who died?

RUBY

I'll change.

INT. CANTONESE CHOW - LATER

The red and dim interior of the Chinese restaurant is sporadically illuminated by hanging paper lanterns. Nearly half of the tables are occupied.

Walter and Ruby (now in skirt and blouse) sit at a booth.

Ruby pinches an egg roll between her chopsticks and raises it to her mouth.

WALTER

You can use your hands - I won't think less of you.

RUBY

I don't want to get the oil all over my fingers.

WALTER

How hygienic.

RUBY

Do you usually harass your dates so unrelentingly?

WALTER

It's a nervous habit of mine.
Besides, you started it.

RUBY

When?

WALTER

At that party, on the hammock.

RUBY

Then why are you taking me to
dinner?

WALTER

Revenge.

Ruby represses a laugh as she raises the egg roll to her
mouth and bites off a piece.

WALTER

(continuing)

I need to ask you something. What
changed your mind?

Ruby looks at Walter as she chews, trying to decide what to
say.

Walter waits for an answer.

WALTER

(continuing)

People usually stall when they're
making stuff up.

Walter puts his fork into a large round dumpling. He dips it
into a tiny saucer of soy sauce.

RUBY

I wasn't stalling, I was chewing.

WALTER

Why did you change your mind?

RUBY

You have a better vocabulary than
my roommates- I thought I might
learn a couple of new words.

WALTER

That's it?

Walter takes the entire dumpling in his mouth.

RUBY

I thought that your plan to meet me
was adorable.

WALTER

(chewing)

It was not adorable - it was
ingenious.

(swallows)

That's it?

Ruby looks at Walter for a moment trying to decide whether or
not to speak her mind.

RUBY

I took a nap after you left my
house that day. I had a dream -
you were in it. We were together on
a hill looking out over a massive
canyon- it seemed completely
comfortable and serene.

WALTER

Did I yodel?

RUBY

I wouldn't have taken your number
out of the garbage if you did.

Walter thinks about what Ruby has said and contemplates
speaking his own mind.

RUBY

What?

WALTER

I had some dreams like that too.

RUBY

When?

WALTER

After I first saw you in that
anthropology class.

Ruby and Walter each take a bite of their respective
appetizers.

The CHATTER of people nearby momentarily crowds their silence.

WALTER
(continuing)
So...uh...what's your major?

Ruby twists her mouth into a sardonic smile.

EXT. BACK YARD - LATER

Walter and Ruby sit next to each other on the hammock near the patio area.

Walter is drinking a beer; Ruby holds a glass of scotch on the rocks in her hand.

WALTER
Do you like your roommates?

RUBY
They leave me alone.

WALTER
Don't get all gushy.

RUBY
They are nice people, we just don't have that much in common. I like to read, listen to music, practice violin...they like to throw parties and chase boys.

WALTER
How come I haven't seen you around campus during the last year and a half?

Ruby looks down at her drink which is nearly empty. She shakes the glass gently, spinning the ice inside in silent circles.

RUBY
My mother died. I took some time off.

Walter, feeling particularly awkward, takes a moment to find the right words.

WALTER
I'm sorry to hear that.

RUBY
It's alright, you didn't know.

Ruby looks at Walter's face, which displays obvious and genuine concern for her.

RUBY
(continuing)
Sarcastic and sensitive - not a bad combination.

WALTER
Attractive and drinking hard liquor
- an even better combination.

Ruby finishes the last of her drink and looks around at the trees and star-filled sky.

Walter watches her, enjoying the quiet moment.

Ruby turns to see Walter's eyes on her. They lean towards each other.

They kiss.

Ruby pulls away from Walter and stands from the hammock.

Walter sways erratically in the suspended netting.

RUBY
We should go inside.

Walter stands.

WALTER
(nodding)
Good idea.

Ruby takes Walter's hand. They walk towards the patio, Walter suppressing his rising elation.

INT. RUBY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Ruby lies asleep in bed, nude beneath the sheets, while Walter lies wide awake, smiling. Giving up on the idea of falling back asleep, he pulls on his boxers, sits up at the edge of the bed, stands and stretches. He looks about the dark, moonlit room: it is fashioned in an older, classier style.

The bed is a four poster frame, the vanity and the desk are antiques, and the shelves are large pieces of polished oak. The shelves are filled with books and musical scores, yet everything seems well ordered.

Walter sees the leather bound book Ruby was reading the night of the party and is immediately drawn to it.

Walter looks at it for a moment as curiosity floods him. He withdraws the book and shuts the drawer.

The cover is of sculpted brown leather; "1938" is printed clearly on the front in somewhat faded golden characters.

Walter turns the book over in his hands and then opens it. Inside is an inscription:

"Remembrances of my early childhood: 1923-1928."

Walter turns the thick yellow page, and finds that the next is covered with dense, immaculate handwriting.

Walter flips to a random page towards the middle of the volume and begins to read.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gregory creeps into his bedroom. He is shivering and covered with dirt.

He slowly shuts the door behind him. He shines the flashlight around his dark room.

His entire body shakes with fear, but he is past the point of crying.

Gregory takes wobbly steps towards his bed, his trembling hand shaking the flashlight's circle of light.

Resting at the foot of his bed is a small sack. Gregory looks alarmed at the sight of it.

He kicks the small sack with his foot; there is no response.

Gregory pinches one corner of the sack with his finger and lifts the cloth.

His mother's jewelry- pearls, rings, pendants- falls to the floor with an echoing CLATTER.

Gregory looks at the window overlooking the water in his bedroom. He walks over to it and unfastens the latch.

He gently pushes the glass panes apart.

The water is almost completely still. The sky is dark gray and the water nearly black below it.

Gregory puts his head out of the window, facing the water.

GREGORY

Leave me alone. Please.

Gregory withdraws back inside and shuts the window. He walks towards his bed and climbs beneath the sheets. He glances towards the window.

The greyish-black sky glows dimly on the other side of the window. The sound of the gentle tide beneath it is barely audible.

Gregory starts to shiver. He sniffs the air in his room; he smells something foul. He COUGHS as a reaction to the malodorous air.

He looks around the room, then back to the window.

A ghostly pale face with bright, red eyes stares back at Gregory from the other side of the window.

Gregory YELPS involuntarily; he pulls the sheets over his face.

VOICE (O.S.)

Gregory?

The door to the room opens; Gregory pulls the sheet away from his face and looks upon it with horror.

Gunther enters the room, simultaneously tired and concerned.

GUNTHER

Did you have a nightmare?

Gregory nods looks away from his father and back to the window.

The only thing visible on the other side of the window is the dark night sky and rippling black water beneath it.

INT. RUBY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Walter stares at the leather-bound book before him; he is quite engrossed with the passages that he has just read.

His nerves are pulled tight and he looks around the room, half expecting to see someone watching him.

Walter shakes his head, shuts the memoir and places it back inside the desk drawer- he has spooked himself enough for one evening.

INT. RUBY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Walter and Ruby lie in bed. Ruby is asleep beneath the covers; Walter lies awake staring at the bumpy plaster of the ceiling above.

He exhales loudly. He disentangles his legs from the blanket twisted around him, but seems to only further complicate the matter.

He rolls to one side of the bed.

He looks at Ruby.

Several strands of silver hair hang from her mouth.

Walter stares at the hairs.

WALTER

Ruby?

Ruby does not respond.

Walter reaches over and gently taps Ruby's shoulder.

WALTER

(continuing)

Ruby.

Ruby does not respond.

Walter brings his hand slowly to Ruby's face.

He pokes at the silvers hairs with his index finger.

The hairs curl around Walter's finger.

Ruby's eyes open; they are completely black.

INT. RUBY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Walter wakes up with a shudder.

Ruby lies asleep beside him.

Walter's groggy apprehension quickly dissipates.
He shuts his eyes and returns to sleep.

CUT TO BLACK

FADE UP FROM

BLACK:

INT. SKATING RINK - NIGHT

POP MUSIC BLARES from fried speakers as PEOPLE on skates, alternately clutch and shove off from the blue-carpeted walls of the roller-skating rink.

Nearby, Jason and Walter sit in a bright orange booth, eating pizza and drinking fountain soda through red-striped straws. Jason looks uncharacteristically concerned.

WALTER

She wants me to see where she grew up, meet her father - that sort of thing.

JASON

You've only been seeing her for six months, isn't it kind of early?

WALTER

Ruby is uncomfortable about going back alone and if I can make her feel better or safer, I'll be glad to do it.

JASON

C'mon - she can't depend on you for everything. I think that Ruby needs to face this on her own.

WALTER

It would be rude of me to say that your lack of experience in dealing with women is very apparent right now, so I'll refrain from doing so.

JASON

Thanks.

WALTER

Ruby rarely talks about her family
or her childhood...

Jason hold up his hand.

JASON

(dismissive)

I'm not that interested.

(beat)

When are we gonna go canoeing?

WALTER

I get back in two weeks- we'll go
the following weekend.

JASON

We'd better.

INT. AIRPLANE - TWILIGHT

Walter sits next to Ruby in the rear of the plane. Walter
eats his meal while Ruby just stares at hers, distastefully.

WALTER

Not hungry?

RUBY

Not for this. I can wait until we
land to have a proper meal.

Walter grabs her styrofoam platter and places it next to his.

WALTER

I prefer to eat all available
meals.

INT. CAB (REAR SEAT) - EVENING

Walter and Ruby sit in the back seat of the cab, admiring the
surroundings.

Ruby points outside the right window.

RUBY

That's the footbridge where I
kissed Mike Lancaster.

Walter smiles as he looks at the historic site.

WALTER
(sarcastically)
I'm jealous.

RUBY
He tasted like a wet shoe.

A white mansion drifts into view.

RUBY
(continuing)
My best friend lived there until we
were twelve.

WALTER
Jennifer Baxter?

Ruby nods.

WALTER
(continuing)
Where is she now?

RUBY
I don't know.

Walter watches the white mansion disappear into the moonlit
night.

WALTER
Are we near?

Ruby points through the windshield.

EXT. GLEICHMAN HOUSE - SAME

The cab pulls into the driveway. Lights are on inside the
house and a large luxury car is parked off to the side.

The cab stops at the edge of the walkway.

INT. CAB (REAR SEAT) - SAME

RUBY
The front door is open.

WALTER
Is somebody home?

RUBY
My father's car is in the driveway.

EXT. GLEICHMAN HOUSE - SAME

Walter and Ruby step out of the car. They both look into the open front door at the end of the topiary-lined wooden walkway, with slight apprehension. Nobody moves inside the house.

Ruby hands a ten dollar bill to the driver. He nods and pulls a latch. THUNK. The cab's trunk slowly opens, like the mouth of a hungry alligator.

Walter and Ruby walk around and pull their luggage from the trunk. Walter shuts the trunk. He picks up the two suitcases and Ruby takes the pile of gifts.

The front door to the house SLAMS shut.

Ruby, startled, lets out a tiny whimper.

RUBY
FATHER?

Silence. Walter looks at Ruby, trying to determine how concerned he should be.

Ruby walks over to the driver and leans down to speak to him.

RUBY
(continuing)
Can you wait here until we get
inside?

DRIVER
Not a problem.

Ruby, followed closely by Walter, walks up the wooden walkway, toward the front door.

Walter looks at the irregularly shaped topiaries that line the walkway. The cab's bright headlights shine from twenty feet away, throwing heavy shadows on everything.

They draw near the front door, their shadows preceding them as they walk.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - SAME

Ruby and Walter step inside, bright headlights throwing their shadows on the stairs opposite the front door. The moon glows faintly in the skylight overhead.

Ruby reaches for a light switch on the wall, and upon locating it, flips it up. The room comes into view with a warm, soft luminance.

Walter turns to face the driver outside and waves goodbye.

EXT. GLEICHMAN - SAME

The driver honks and then turns his radio on. Static crackles loudly over an old blues tune.

He shifts the gear into reverse and turns his head to look out the rear window. He precedes to back the vehicle towards the street.

Gravel and stone POP beneath the car's tires as the cab slowly nears the street.

The driver cuts the wheel and his headlights flash across the woods nearby briefly illuminating a PALE FACE watching from between the trees. The driver does not notice the face and continues to drive away

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - SAME

Walter shuts the door.

RUBY

Father?

Ruby waits for a response, but does not receive one.

WALTER

This is a nice house.

RUBY

Just put the luggage down here for a moment.

Walter and Ruby rest their baggage and presents beside the wooden coat rack and copper umbrella holder near the door.

Ruby exits the reception room; Walter follows.

INT. DEN - SAME

Ruby stabs her hand into the dark room. She turns on another light. The room has many, many shelves filled to capacity with thousands of books; the far wall holds a large coral stone fireplace.

WALTER

I guess your father likes to read.

Walter is pleased to see a record player and a large radio sitting in one corner of the room; a large wooden globe sits in another, beneath two windows. On the wood-paneled floor lie several large clumps of dirt, which Ruby is somewhat surprised to find in the otherwise immaculate interior. She walks towards a door on the right side of the room. She opens the door.

INT. WALK-IN CLOSET - SAME

Ruby stabs her hand inside the black closet. CLICK. The light does not illuminate.

Ruby walks into the dark room; she reaches blindly into a darkened corner and grabs what she needs.

She leaves the room holding a dustpan and broom.

INT. DEN - SAME

Ruby walks over to the dirt and places the dustpan on the floor. She runs the broom over the clumps, sweeping them into a larger mound.

RUBY

I wonder where my father is.

WALTER

Does he usually leave the door open?

RUBY

He has been getting a little forgetful the past few years.

As she sweeps the dirt away, several grooves in the floor are revealed.

Walter leans closer to inspect the grooves; they are four lines which appear to be parallel scratches about an eighth of an inch deep and four inches long.

WALTER

What're these?

RUBY

I don't know.

Walter stands up, puzzled; Ruby thinks on the matter while she sweeps the remaining dirt into the dustpan.

Walter looks up from the marks and sees a tall MAN in his late sixties with aquiline features, silver hair and dark eyes.

RUBY
(continuing)
Father.

The Man walks towards and embraces his daughter. She kisses him on the cheek.

RUBY
(continuing)
It's nice to see you.

He nods.

He turns his gaze to Walter. Walter extends his hand; her father clasps it firmly.

WALTER
I'm Walter.

FATHER
I am Gregory Gleichman.

WALTER
Nice to meet you.

His eyes examine Walter in a very direct and unflinching manner.

WALTER
(continuing)
This is a very nice house that you have.

Gregory nods.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room's two large windows face out into the woods behind the house, the tangled trees of which clutch at the skies above. Walter and Ruby unpack their suitcases in the bedroom.

Walter seems distant, preoccupied.

RUBY
What's wrong?

WALTER
I didn't know your father's name
was Gregory.

Ruby looks puzzled by his response. Walter reluctantly
explains his concern.

WALTER
(continuing)
Gregory is the name of the boy in
that weird journal you keep-

RUBY
(angry)
You had no right to read that book!

WALTER
I didn't know...

RUBY
(shaking her head)
I shouldn't have left it out.

Ruby continues to unpack in silence; Walter's curiosity
grows.

WALTER
Did your father give you that book?

RUBY
My brothers and I found it in our
mother's safety deposit box after
she...died.

WALTER
How does it end?

RUBY
It doesn't end...it just stops.

WALTER
Do you think what happened in the
book really-

RUBY
(brusque)
I'm not comfortable talking about
it, alright?

Walter relents and continues unpacking his clothing, a very distracted automaton.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Walter, Ruby, and Gregory sit at the dining table beneath the enormous chandelier that has hung in the room since Gregory's childhood. Walter wears a brown sweater and Ruby wears a grey silk blouse. Walter has just finished his soup.

WALTER

That was a great split pea soup Mr. Gleichman.

Gregory nods his head with very contained appreciation. He finishes his soup as well.

Walter slides his chair back and stands up.

WALTER

(continuing)

I'll take the dishes.

RUBY

Sit back down. You don't know where anything goes.

Ruby gets up and grabs the three soup bowls.

Walter does not look ecstatic about sitting at the table alone with Gregory.

GREGORY

(to Ruby)

Will you bring out the salad?

Ruby nods and leaves the room.

Gregory fixes Walter with a inquisitive look.

GREGORY

(continuing)

Were you born in Florida?

WALTER

Yes.

GREGORY

And your parents are from Florida as well?

WALTER

Yes.

Gregory nods, pondering the information.

GREGORY

How did your parents meet?

Walter is a little confused by Gregory's direct and atypical inquiries.

WALTER

I'm not sure actually - I think in college.

GREGORY

Where were their families from?

WALTER

My Mother's parents came over from Poland and my Father's grandparents came over from Germany and Russia.

Gregory nods, thinking to himself.

GREGORY

Have you ever been to Poland or Germany?

WALTER

No.

GREGORY

You don't care about your heritage?

Walter becomes a bit defensive over this remark, but manages to answer politely.

WALTER

I do care, I just haven't had the opportunity or means to go there.

GREGORY

You should make more of an effort.

Walter represses his growing irritation.

WALTER

I'll be sure to try.

Ruby enters the room carrying a large bowl of salad.

Walter is pleased to have her back at the table.

INT. DEN - LATER

Walter and Gregory sit on the large couch of the book-filled room. Ruby sits opposite them upon a wooden stool. Walter eyes the phonograph standing in the far corner of the room.

WALTER
(to Gregory)
Does that play 78s?

GREGORY
Yes. All of my collection is 78
speed.

WALTER
Classical stuff?

GREGORY
Religious orchestral works
primarily. I also have two dozen
or so secular songs and arias.

WALTER
That sounds...enjoyable.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE

Ruby sits in bed, doing a crossword puzzle in a magazine. Walter, standing in his underwear, pulls a pair of shorts from his bag. Curtains have been drawn in front of the two large windows.

Walter pulls on his shorts.

WALTER
I'm looking forward to sleeping
late tomorrow.

RUBY
I hope my father doesn't wake us-
he's a morning person.

WALTER
The morning is overrated. Typically
by morning people.

Ruby writes diagonally across the puzzle boxes. Walter sits on the edge of the bed and pulls off his socks.

Ruby looks up from her puzzle; genuine appreciation shines upon her face.

RUBY

It's nice to have you here. Thank you for coming with me.

WALTER

No problem. You feel alright?

Ruby nods her head.

RUBY

This is where I grew up. My crib was even in this room.

Walter kisses her gently upon the lips.

WALTER

I'm exhausted.

Ruby nods, closes her crossword puzzle book, and reaches for the nearby table lamp. She looks at a small open space between the curtains.

RUBY

Could you please close the curtains all the way?

Walter pushes himself up from the edge of the bed and walks to the gap in the curtains. He shuts the curtains over the window. He climbs back into bed.

Ruby turns off the light on the nearby night table.

WALTER

Goodnight.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Moonlight weakly glows around the edges of the curtains.

Walter lies awake in bed, staring at the dim light that struggles through the curtain-covered window.

He sits upright and places his bare feet upon the floor.

Walter walks towards the door; he stealthily twists the knob and opens the door in an effort not to arouse Ruby from her deep sleep.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Walter makes his way down the hallway; light from a skylight shines upon the heavy oaken paneling and thick carpeting.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME

Walter turns on the light in the bathroom. The walls are a mosaic of stones and irregularly chipped tiles.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Walter exits the bathroom and walks down the hallway, towards the far end.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Walter walks into the room, turning on a shaded lamp as he does so. Warm orange light spills upon the rows and rows of books that line the walls like vertical bricks.

He walks over to the nearest wall, with his head slightly angled to better read the spines.

He does not see anything of immediate interest; he continues perusing as he walks along the wall.

Carlights from the distant road shine through the two windows across the room. The lights play upon the various dim and glossy spines of the books. Walter sees a title upon a very thick spine that secures his interest.

It reads, in golden embossed print, "Gleichman Family: 1971 1974."

Walter pulls the photo album from the shelf. He walks over to a plush recliner chair and takes a seat, turning on a reading lamp as he does so.

Walter opens the book; the photographs within are held in place by triangular pieces of ribbon.

Walter looks at the first photograph:

The Gleichman family is pictured on a ski slope:

On the left stands Gregory whose hair is a bit darker than now;

to his right stands a (somewhat boyish) thirteen year old Ruby;

to her right stand two boys- identical twins in their late teens- each holding their skis with utmost importance;

on the farthest right stands Mrs. Nancy Gleichman, a healthy woman with a strong jaw and wavy black hair.

Another photo depicts the family in a lodge area, sipping cider and hot chocolate.

Another photo depicts Gregory and Nancy on a ski lift ascending a mountainside (taken from the mountain top); Nancy's head rests upon Gregory's shoulder.

Headlights from the distant road shine into and glide across the room accompanied by the faint murmur of a car engine.

Walter continues to turn the pages in the album, allowing only a brief unstudied glance for each photo.

Until something catches his eye.

He inspects the photo on the right hand page more closely; it depicts the family gathered around a table with a birthday cake. Ruby and her twin brothers stand close around the cake; Nancy Gleichman stands behind them looking at the camera- her hair has turned gray and she looks exceptionally thin.

Walter turns the page; the book holds no more photographs.

He returns the book to its spot on the shelf, sliding it smoothly home. He looks at the adjacent spines:

"Gleichman Investment/Portfolio,"

"Gleichman Medical,"

"Gleichman Mutual,"

"Gleichman Real Estate."

Walter looks at the spines and then to the dark hall, contemplating further investigation.

Walter pulls the "Gleichman Medical" book from the shelf. He looks down the darkened hallway once again and neither sees nor hears anyone.

He cracks open the books. A couple of papers fall to the floor.

Walter kneels down to the floor; his eyes wander to the four grooves scratched into the wooden floor.

He looks away from these marks and back to the papers he just dropped.

Walter grabs the papers and stands up; they are receipts for Herman's Pharmacy and Panakwee Drugstore.

He opens the book further and begins to rifle through the pages. Receipts, prescriptions, and several charts are stapled to the succeeding pages. Most of the paperwork pertains to Nancy Gleichman.

Walter comes upon a color photograph of a female human mouth, held open wide by a stainless steel bar. A hand in a medical glove lifts up the patient's tongue to reveal the area beneath. A small purple boil glistens below the tongue.

Walter turns the page and grimaces at a similar photo in which the purple swelling has grown to about the size of a grape. On the opposite side of the photo album another photo shows that the purplish growth is turning black.

The next page holds a photograph in which tiny black hairs protrude from the purplish-black tumorous growth.

Another passing car's headlights shine through the windows, illuminating the gruesome photos even more. Walter looks away from the photo album, towards the window.

A form, silhouetted by the streaming headlights, stands on the other side of the window, blocking the light.

Walter freezes momentarily; he involuntarily clenches his hands upon the book and shuts his mouth.

The distant car drives on by and the headlights swing past the house.

Walter stares at the window, the yard and street beyond invisible in the dark night.

Walter, doubting what he has seen, stares at the window. He closes the book and rests it upon the chair.

Walter lifts the lampshade off of the reading lamp; the bright light from the uncovered bulb screams in every direction.

The area beyond the window appears empty; the window itself is smudged in three different places.

Walter places the shade back upon the reading lamp. He is anxious for it to be morning.

He places the book back upon the shelf, shuts off the lights and leaves the room.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Walter and Ruby lie next to each other in bed.

Walter is not asleep.

EXT. PINE TRAIL - NEXT MORNING

It is a misty and wet day. Ruby leads Walter along a trail that weaves within a forest of enormous, bare pine trees.

Walter wears a backpack strapped over his rain jacket; Ruby has a canvas bag slung over her right shoulder.

WALTER
It's raining.

RUBY
It isn't raining.

Walter wipes the water from his brow.

WALTER
Then I'm sweating even more than I
thought.

Ruby ducks beneath a low pine branch that juts across the path.

RUBY
Watch the branch.

Walter awkwardly ducks beneath the branch, but it snags on a strap of his backpack.

WALTER
Shit.

Walter surges forward; the branch releases him and snaps back into place.

The rain falls harder, HISSING as it showers through the bare branches.

Walter tilts his head down in an effort to keep the rain from getting in his eyes.

WALTER
(continuing)
It's raining.

RUBY
That is why you are wearing a rain jacket.

WALTER
I don't think this one was intended for tropical storms- but maybe I just put it on wrong.

Ruby does not notice Walter's remark; her eyes are locked on the path ahead of her.

RUBY
We're nearly there.

Walter lifts his head to look ahead of him.

The trees in the path ahead of him are blackened. The nearest have burnt branches and trunks; the furthest are dead husks of black coal waiting to topple.

Ruby presses into the charred area; Walter follows.

EXT. SCORCHED FOREST - SAME

The couple silently inspects the blackened vestiges of the nearby trees. The damage seems to cover an area of about three acres.

Walter walks over to a small blackened pine. He presses his palm against it. He pushes the ten foot tree over- it CRACKS and then crumbles into a pile of charcoal and soot.

Walter SNEEZES as the airborne ashes tickle his nose.

Ruby looks around in silent awe. The rain slows down noticeably.

RUBY
It hasn't grown back at all.

WALTER

When did this happen?

Ruby looks about the charred environs. Walter opens his mouth to ask her the question a second time, but Ruby responds slowly, from a distant place.

RUBY

I didn't tell you what happened the last time I came home...

(beat)

My father was supposed to meet me, but he was snowed in, over in Germany. I was alone...

INT. BEDROOM - LATE

Ruby sits in bed in an old, wood-paneled house. She is doing a crossword puzzle in a magazine. The shaded reading lamp casts a small circle of light that does not extend to the edges of the large room.

The door to the room is shut.

Two large windows face the forest, which is about two acres from the house and faintly visible in the light of the crescent moon.

Ruby concentrates on her puzzle which is nearly complete.

She writes letters in the tiny, vertically stacked boxes, with a look of triumph upon her face- these are the last empty spaces. She shuts the magazine, places it on the night stand, and turns off the lamp.

Ruby lies down and shuts her eyes. She falls asleep quickly.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE

Ruby wakes up, sharply and keenly aware. She turns to face the window.

The woods are a dark black swath against the dark gray sky.

Ruby stares at the woods, letting her eyes adjust to the dim blue light of the moon. She sees nothing.

Ruby lies back down staring at the ceiling; it will be a while before she can fall back asleep.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE

Ruby springs awake again, a faint whimper coming from her throat as she does so. She faces the window and stares towards the forest. A fire burns within the woods.

Ruby stares at the fire for a moment, shocked and immobile. It is some distance within the forest, yet it seems to stretch across several acres. Ruby GASPS as she sees a MAN walk along the edge of the woods, silhouetted by the fire. He appears to be nude. He moves quickly and with purpose.

He soon disappears into the darkness.

INT. STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Ruby darts into the study, doing everything she can to hold herself together. The phone is missing from the desk.

EXT. GLEICHMAN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ruby runs out of the front door, wearing flannel pajamas and socks only.

EXT. WINDING ROAD - SAME

Ruby runs along the road, not looking back.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ruby runs along the gravel driveway of the large mansion, the stones ripping apart what is left of her socks.

She POUNDS on the door with one hand and RINGS the bell with the other.

RUBY
MR. THATCHER! IT'S RUBY GLEICHMAN-
I NEED TO CALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT
AND THE POLICE!

She looks at her feet; blood stains the socks and the walkway decking.

MR. THATCHER (O.S.)
I'm coming dear, don't worry.

Ruby stares at her lacerated feet and quietly begins to cry.

EXT. GLEICHMAN HOUSE - LATER

The revolving and blinking red lights of three police cars and one fire engine move along the trees, the lawn, and the front of the house. Half a dozen FIREFIGHTERS and three POLICEMEN stand by their vehicles, quietly talking to each other.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

Ruby sits in the room, upon the edge of the bed. A very serious looking thirty-five-year-old police CAPTAIN and his LIEUTENANT, a haggard looking man of fifty, stand in silence near the door. They all stare out through the enormous picture windows, into the woods.

EXT. SCORCHED FOREST - NOW

Walter stands beside Ruby, holding her hands in an attempt to comfort her. Stares at the ground as she completes the tale.

RUBY

They didn't find him. The next day they found some unidentifiable fingerprints throughout the house.

(beat)

They found some in my bedroom. He came...he came into...

Ruby shudders and Walter hugs her tightly.

WALTER

Did he take anything?

RUBY

No. We even found the phones the next day, hidden beneath the sofa.

(looking up at Walter)

I wish he had stolen something...as it is, we don't know who he is or what he wanted with us.

WALTER

He's probably just some wacko who worked for the phone company

(beat)

....or the fire department...

(beat)

....or both...

Ruby does not smile.

WALTER
(continuing)
Or not...

Ruby walks up to a blackened tree and touches it with her index finger. She slides her finger down the ashen bark, debris falling as she does so.

RUBY
Let's get back.

EXT. UP THE TRAIL - SAME

The couple walks into a healthier area of the woodlands.

RUBY
My mother and I used to walk these trails when my Father and brothers were away in the mountains. We would come out here with tea sandwiches, a thermos of lemonade and a couple of books, and stay almost until dark.
(beat)
I still miss her.

WALTER
Do you know what exactly happened to her...at the end?

RUBY
She had a schizophrenic episode which she never recovered from. That's what her doctors told us anyway.

WALTER
I'm sorry.

RUBY
It's so strange to think she's really gone.

EXT. PINE TRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Ruby and Walter walk holding hands into a densely forested region.

WALTER
What kind of stew is your father making?

RUBY
Beef with red wine and pearl
onions.

Walter hungrily anticipates the meal.

WALTER
Watch the branch.

The two duck beneath the branch that juts into the trail.

They stand upright.

A MAN stands on the trail, looking at them from a distance of at least fifty feet. He is covered in filth and rags.

Fearful, Walter stops immediately, letting go of Ruby's hand.

RUBY
GOOD MORNING!

Ruby waves to the Filthy Man. The Filthy Man does not respond.

RUBY
(continuing)
HELLO!

The Filthy Man turns from the couple and steps off of the trail. Walter looks at Ruby, trying to determine how alarmed he should be by the stranger's behavior. Ruby looks ahead, puzzled by the encounter.

WALTER
What should we do?

RUBY
We should leave the woods.

WALTER
What if he's waiting for us up ahead?

RUBY
That is the only way back - we have to go.

Walter nods. The two walk forward, extremely aware of sights and sounds around them. They glance expectantly to and beyond each tree and rock that they pass.

They make it to the point on the path where the Filthy Man stood moments ago. Once past this point, Ruby feels that they are less likely to be accosted.

RUBY

Quickly.

Walter nods in agreement. The couple moves as quickly as they can short of running.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Ruby KNOCKS on the sliding glass door of the large turquoise-tiled kitchen; Walter stands beside her.

Gregory looks away from his four gallon soup pot to the anxious and drenched faces of Walter and Ruby standing on the decking that extends from the kitchen. He approaches them.

Walter glances back to the woods.

Gregory undoes the locking pin and slides open the door.

RUBY

Somebody is on our property.

Gregory looks past Ruby and Walter to the woods behind them.

Ruby and Walter step inside; Gregory's eyes scan the woods.

GREGORY

A vagrant?

RUBY

Probably.

GREGORY

Did he say anything?

RUBY

No. Nothing. He just looked at us and walked away.

WALTER

We heard some steps in the woods earlier, but we thought it was just an animal. Thinking about it now- it must have been him following us.

Gregory shuts the glass door and looks at Walter; he then looks to his daughter.

GREGORY
I'm going to have the sheriff
search the grounds.

RUBY
Do you think that he might be the
arsonist?

GREGORY
It is possible.

Gregory looks through the sliding glass door for a
contemplative moment.

He turns back to face Ruby and Walter.

GREGORY
(continuing)
You both should clean up and put on
some dry clothing. Do not leave
the house until the police have
checked our property.

Ruby nods and then turns to Walter, who has just begun to
shiver from his soaking.

RUBY
You can take the first shower.

WALTER
Gladly.

INT. RUBY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Walter sits on the bed, staring out through the window at the
woods. He wears a dry t-shirt and blue jeans.

Ruby enters the room wearing a bath robe. She towel-dries
her straight black hair.

RUBY
Have the police found anything?

WALTER
Nah. They're just talking with
your father.

Ruby sets the towel on a hook that protrudes from the back of
the door. She walks over to the window and looks out as
well.

WALTER
(continuing)
Don't you think that your father's
behavior is a bit peculiar?

Ruby turns to face Walter.

RUBY
What are you insinuating?

WALTER
You don't need to get defensive-
you've said yourself that he's
secretive.

Ruby, agitated, looks back out through the window towards the
woods.

WALTER
(continuing)
I was just thinking about the
questions he asked us when we came
in. He assumed right away that the
man was a vagrant. Why? Your
father also asked if the man spoke,
when the more normal question would
have been "What did the man say?"

RUBY
And...?

WALTER
I don't know, it just seems like he
has an idea who this man is.

Ruby says nothing as she stares out of the window.

WALTER
(continuing)
Maybe that man in the woods knows
something incriminating about your
father.

Ruby looks irritated.

RUBY
My father is not a criminal.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

GREGORY'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Ruby. Walter. The sheriff would
 like to speak to you for a moment.

WALTER
 We'll be out in just a minute Mr.
 Gleichman.

Walter stands up and walks towards the door; Ruby still
 glowers from their conversation.

RUBY
 I'd prefer it if you drop the
 subject altogether.

Walter looks at Ruby who is unable to face him.

WALTER
 Do you know who that man is?

Ruby looks up at Walter; she is indignant.

RUBY
 I would have told you if I did.

GREGORY'S VOICE (O.S.)
 Ruby. Walter.

Walter does not fully believe her, but he wants to make the
 situation copacetic before they leave the room.

WALTER
 I'll drop it, alright?

Ruby nods in agreement.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ruby and Walter sit in the room, each looking at a book.

Ruby reads, absorbed by the text, but Walter is very
 distracted and unable to focus.

Walter's attention wanders over to Ruby - his gaze has more
 than a hint of suspicion in it.

Ruby continues to read, oblivious to Walter's scrutiny.

Walter gets up from the sofa.

WALTER
I'm going to bed.

RUBY
I'll join you in a while, after
I've finished this chapter.

They kiss.

Walter leaves the room.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Walter walks down the hallway towards the bedroom.

He looks at the reception area at the end of the hallway. He proceeds towards it, past Ruby's bedroom.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - SAME

Walter enters the area, looking at the stairway ahead of him.

Moonlight pours in through the skylight above.

Walter walks up the stairway.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME

Walter quietly walks along the hall. On his left is a banister and railing that overlook the reception area; on his right lie two doors- one open and one shut.

Walter walks over to the open door and looks inside. It is dark but apparently uninhabited.

Walter enters, shutting the door behind himself.

INT. UPSTAIRS STUDY - SAME

Walter turns on the light. The room is a large study filled with books and folders neatly - though densely compartmentalized.

Two walls of the room are covered with maps. Maps of the United States, maps of Europe, maps of China, etc.

Walter walks over to a map of the entire world that spans more than four feet across.

The map has been marked with various colored inks.

Colored dots and asterisks are speckled about Germany, Austria, Poland, New York State, and Florida in fairly linear patterns.

Walter walks away from the map and towards a shelf of books. He tilts his head to read the spines; they are mostly German or Polish titles.

He pulls one book from the shelf to examine. It is entitled "Wachet Auf." He opens the book.

The first page he turns to has an archaic etching of a child with three arms. The opposite page has a photograph of a newborn infant that has three extra fingers growing from its right hand.

Walter flips through, randomly to another page. The two page spread features sketches of children with vestigial tails protruding from their posterior ends.

Walter turns to the next page. He sees photographs of newborn infants with small unformed tails protruding from their backside.

Walter flips forward and the book falls open to a page marked with a white notecard.

The left illustration is of a gasping infant with a swollen neck. The right is a photograph of an infant whose fingers seem fused into one solid mass. Its neck is long and thin and its eyes are completely black.

Walter shuts the book and places it back upon the shelf.

He looks around the room and decides he should leave it.

He walks to the door, shuts off the light and exits.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME

Walter steps into the darkened hallway. He walks quietly towards the banister stairway when a sound catches his attention.

He turns to face the closed door next to the upstairs study.

He approaches the door slowly and quietly. Walter lets his weight settle on each foot in a gradual way that minimizes the CREAKING of the wood beneath him.

He arrives near the door and listens intently.

He hears a barely audible WHISPERING coming from the other side of the door.

He turns his right ear to the door and leans even closer. Though slightly louder, the whispering is still unintelligible.

Walter presses his ear to the door.

The whispering stops.

Loud FOOTSTEPS approach the door from within the room.

Walter lifts his head and darts noisily towards the stairwell.

The door opens.

Walter races down the stairs, not looking back.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - SAME

Walter scurries through the room, into the hallway.

INT. RUBY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Walter slips into the room. Ruby, seated upon the edge of the bed, regards his entrance with open disdain.

RUBY

Don't tell me you were in the bathroom- I checked.

WALTER

I'd like to go home. I'm not comfortable here.

RUBY

Of course you're not comfortable- you're running around the house in the middle of the night. You're covered with sweat.

Walter wipes his brow to verify Ruby's accusation. His hand comes away glistening with perspiration.

WALTER

I'd like to leave. You can stay if you want to, but I want to leave.

Ruby, seeing how frazzled Walter is, softens her approach.

RUBY

Calm down Walter - you're overexcited.

WALTER

I heard people talking in your father's room.

RUBY

He must have been on the telephone.

WALTER

No. I heard two voices. I couldn't understand what they were saying- it sounded like some other language.

RUBY

Maybe he had a television program on, I don't know. But why were you upstairs and why were you eavesdropping? You're doing this to yourself.

WALTER

The fire, the weird books, the man in the woods, the voices in the room- are you saying I made this stuff up?

RUBY

No, but that doesn't mean that these things have any correlation to each other whatsoever. Tomorrow morning you'll laugh at how anxious you're being right now, I promise you. Besides, I want you to at least meet my brothers before you flee the house in abject terror.

Walter takes a deep breath and looks around the room, almost as if looking for a new piece of horrible evidence to bring forth.

He looks at Ruby; she is grinning.

WALTER

Don't laugh at me.

RUBY

I'm not.

WALTER

Well, don't smirk either. Let's see how I feel about all of this tomorrow.

RUBY

Agreed.

Ruby climbs beneath the blanket; Walter looks at her with mistrust in his eyes.

He does not know what to think.

INT. RUBY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Walter lies in the bed, entangled in sheets from a night of intermittent sleeping.

He awakens to find that Ruby has already gotten out of bed.

He hears the sound of conversation coming from another room.

He sits up, rubbing his right eye with an index finger.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Gregory and Ruby sit at the table eating pastries and drinking tea with the twins. CARTER and SAMUEL are handsome, dark-featured identical twins in their early thirties. The primary physical difference between them is that Carter is robust and healthy while Samuel has hair salted with gray, circles under his eyes, and an altogether leaner appearance.

Walter walks into the room wearing jeans and a brown t-shirt that says "Mr. Cool" in puffy yellow letters. His eyes are still glassy from just having woken up.

Carter and Ruby look over towards Walter.

RUBY

Walter, this is Carter.

Walter shuffles forward and extends his hand across the table. Carter shakes Walter's hand, firmly.

WALTER

Nice to meet you.

CARTER

Likewise.

RUBY
And this is Samuel.

Walter steps towards Samuel and extends his hand.

Gregory looks from Walter to Samuel.

Samuel regards Walter's hand with momentary curiosity before clasping it in a handshake.

WALTER
Nice to meet you.

SAMUEL
It is nice to meet you as well.

Samuel nods his head and smiles weakly.

RUBY
Sit down with us- we still have
some pastries left.

Walter pulls a chair back from the table and sits down,
hungrily anticipating his breakfast.

WALTER
Do you have any cheese danishes in
that basket?

Ruby looks into the wicker basket filled with pastries. She
fishes out two of the requested items.

GREGORY
(to Carter)
How is Eva doing?

CARTER
She's doing very well. You'll have
to fly out and visit us once the
baby is born- we'd love to have
you.

GREGORY
Of course I will.

CARTER
You too Ruby.

RUBY
I'd love to.

Ruby hands a plate with two cheese danishes and a cup of tea over to Walter.

WALTER

Thanks.

(to Carter)

Where in Germany do you live?

CARTER

Saltzheim, not far from where our grandfather was born.

Walter turns towards Samuel, who stares absently at the tea and croissant before him, not eating.

WALTER

Where do you live?

Samuel blankly looks up at Walter; he has not heard the question.

CARTER

He lives with my wife and me, in our guest house.

Samuel nods in agreement.

Walter bites into his cheese danish.

Gregory looks at Samuel with concern.

GREGORY

Not hungry?

SAMUEL

No.

GREGORY

You are thinner every time I see you.

SAMUEL

(defensively)

I am just not particularly hungry these days.

Gregory, concerned, looks over to Carter. Carter shakes his head. Gregory looks back to Samuel.

Walter passes the awkward moments with mouthfuls of cheese danish and hot tea.

GREGORY

We're just concerned.

SAMUEL

I know.

INT. RUBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walter, wearing a long-sleeve shirt and a tie, lies on the bed. His hands rest upon his slightly swollen stomach. Ruby sits up, pencil in hand, working on a crossword puzzle.

WALTER

I'm going to explode.

Ruby does not look up from her puzzle.

RUBY

You ate too much.

WALTER

That restaurant was amazing, how could I not gorge? That schnitzel was straight from the gods. How could Samuel sit there and not eat?

Ruby looks at Walter.

RUBY

He hasn't eaten much since our mother died. He was the only one around when she had her final episode- when it progressed into schizophrenic ravings.

Walter sits up a bit.

WALTER

That must have been horrible.

RUBY

Before our mother died, Samuel had a fiance and a house in Switzerland. Now he lives alone in Carter's guest house.

WALTER

Maybe he should see a psychiatrist.

RUBY

We asked him to, but he refused.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Walter, wearing shorts and a t-shirt, groggily walks into the hallway from the bathroom that he has just used. Light spills into the hallway from the den at the far end.

He turns and looks down the hallway, towards the den.

Samuel is seated alone by the reading lamp. He stares vacantly at the book that lies open in his lap.

Walter walks back into the bedroom, shutting the door behind him.

INT. RUBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walter and Ruby lie in bed in the dark room. Moonlight peeps through the curtains.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Absolute darkness fills the space. The moonlight has vanished behind the trees.

RUBY
(nervously whispered)
Did you hear something?

WALTER
(groggy)
What?

RUBY
(whispered)
Shhh. Did you hear a noise?

WALTER
(whispered)
I've been asleep.

RUBY
(whispered)
I heard something.

WALTER
(whispered)
What did you hear?

RUBY
(whispered)
Breathing.

WALTER
(whispered)
Turn on the light.

RUBY
(whispered)
I'm scared.

WALTER
(whispered)
Turn on the light.
(louder)
Samuel?

RUBY
(whispered)
Shhhhh. Listen!

Silence.

Silence.

WALTER
I don't hear anything.

RUBY
I can smell something rotten. My
God.

WALTER
Dammit!

RUBY
Don't!

Walter, having reached around in the darkness and located the lamp, turns the light on.

The Filthy Man stands at the side of the bed with his crimson eyes trained on Ruby.

Ruby SHRIEKS.

The Filthy Man swings a heavy piece of wood down upon Walter's head.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. COMPLETE DARKNESS

No lights, glimmers, or refractions can be seen anywhere. The sound of erratic breathing reverberates slightly in the unseen space. A loud COUGH interrupts the breathing.

RUBY

Walter, are you awake?

Her voice echoes in the vast area.

WALTER

(groggily)

I'm freezing. Ruby...what happened?

RUBY

I'm not sure. I woke up chained to the floor. Are you tied up too?

Some muffled SCRAPING and SCUFFLING sounds echo in the area.

WALTER

Yes.

(beat)

Where are we?

RUBY

I think we're underground. In a cavern.

WALTER

How long have we been here?

RUBY

I can't tell. Maybe a few hours, maybe less, maybe more...

WALTER

Ouch!

(beat)

Sweat is dripping into my eyes.

RUBY

You might be bleeding - you got hit over the head.

WALTER

Why do you think he brought us here?

RUBY
I don't...
(beat)
I don't know...

Ruby begins to WEEP.

Her sobs echo all around.

WALTER
Ruby...

Ruby SNIFFS a couple of times and stops her crying.

WALTER
(continuing)
Should we yell for help?

RUBY
I tried while you were sleeping. I
woke up a couple of rats.

WALTER
If one of those things climbs onto
me I'll shit my pants.

A tiny dark orange sparkle of light appears in the distance.

WALTER
(continuing; whispered)
You see that?

RUBY
(whispered)
Yes.

The light grows slightly brighter though it is not yet strong enough to illuminate Walter, Ruby, or their area.

WALTER
It's getting brighter.

The flickering light faintly illuminates the interior.

The room is filled with gigantic stalagmites; upthrust tapering spikes of rock pointed towards the darkness above.

Walter is tied to the base of a fifteen foot stalagmite. Thick rope wraps tightly around his neck, torso, arms and legs in a cocoon-like manner.

A streak of blood runs from his forehead over his right eyelid and down his cheek. He is still wearing his sleeping attire-boxer shorts and white tube socks- beneath the ropes.

Walter is shaking; his every exhalation turns to steam in the frigid air.

Thirty feet away stands Ruby, her feet fettered to each other and to the ground by iron shackles. Her arms remain unbound. She has a cracked and swollen lower lip. She wears a long nightshirt and is barefoot.

She is tethered to the ground within a circular depression twenty feet in diameter; the depression is four feet lower than the floor of the rest of the enormous cavern.

Ruby and Walter's gazes are drawn to the ground near Ruby.

A black chasm, ten feet in diameter lies near the center of the depression.

The light disappears, throwing Walter, Ruby and their surroundings into complete darkness.

A SPLASHING sound echoes in the cavern.

WALTER

I guess we're near water.

The light reappears from the darkness, outlining the mouth of a far off rock tunnel. The light grows noticeably brighter and larger.

The light continues to brighten. Angular shadows cast on and by the spears of rock move slowly about the cavern.

The appearance of the figure carrying it is now discernible.

WALTER

Fuck.

It is the Filthy Man, but he is no longer dirty. He is completely naked and drips with water from his recent submersion.

He is an albino.

Ruby and Walter look at each other in horrified silence.

The Albino walks calmly and quietly towards the depression; he holds the lantern in his right hand, it's dim luminescence underlighting his pale visage.

He reaches the rim of the depression, four feet below Ruby looks up at him in horrified silence.

WALTER
WHAT DO YOU WANT!?!

The Albino's eyes flicker on Walter momentarily and then return to Ruby.

WALTER
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

The Albino disregards Walter's loud address.

The Albino rests the lamp on the edge of the depression.

RUBY
GET AWAY!

The albino turns away from Ruby and calls out into the darkness.

ALBINO
Kadli karee!

He sits beside the lamp, dangling his legs over the side, waiting.

The sound of bare feet stepping on wet rock resounds within the cavern.

Ruby and Walter watch, apprehensively and helplessly; their gazes vacillating between the area from which the footsteps sound and the unblinking red eyes of the albino.

WALTER
Oh fuck.

Two more albinos step out of the darkness, into the lantern's specular light. One of them is completely nude and carries a weighty dark green sphere within his hands; the other is dressed in a tattered robe covered with purplish-brown stains and carries a long, slender knife.

RUBY
(To the new arrivals)
What do you want from us?

The duo reaches the edge of the depression Ruby is confined within and stops to stand beside the seated albino. The robed albino delicately slices in the dark green sphere held firmly by his companion.

The seated albino addresses his peers.

ALBINO
Karefan kej.

The robed Albino nods and hands the dark green sphere to the seated one. The duo departs, quickly and wholly and absorbed by the opaque darkness.

The remaining albino scratches through the exterior of the dark green sphere and begins to pull the elastic green skin away. The layer underneath is a moist grey.

WALTER
(to Ruby)
What the fuck is that?

RUBY
I'm not sure.
(beat, leans forward)
Some kind of fruit?

The Albino peels away the last of the remaining green skin. He pokes his long fingernail into the mucous-like covering, extracting and then discarding several small, conical pits.

He points to Ruby and motions for her to approach him.

Ruby does not advance towards him.

ALBINO
Kijakree.

Ruby stands still.

The Albino leaps into the depression, leaving the gourd and lantern resting on the rim. Ruby steps back, but her chain only permits her a several foot retreat.

Tears come to Walter's eyes as he struggles against his imprisoning ropes.

The Albino grabs Ruby's left arm by the wrist. He twists it violently, sending her to her knees upon the rocky floor.

Ruby cries out in pain.

The Albino squeezes Ruby's wrist with tremendous strength.

Blue veins begin to become visible along Ruby's arm- from her wrist to her shoulder. Her hand turns bluish-red. Tears stream down her face.

RUBY

Please...

The Albino increases the pressure. The blue veins along her arm darken to purplish hue. Her hand is blue.

WALTER

STOP!!!

Ruby sobs silently, with her mouth wide open.

Her bluish-black hand begins to shake spasmodically.

Walter shuts his eyes.

The Albino releases his grip.

Ruby pitches forward, onto the dirt and rock of the depression with a GASP.

Walter opens his eyes.

The Albino motions for Ruby to follow him.

The Albino walks towards the lantern and gourd.

Shaking, sweating, and bleary-eyed, Ruby follows. She bends her arm and clenches her fingers as she walks in an effort to restore circulation. The veins and bluish hue all fade beneath her flushed red skin.

The Albino reaches up and grabs the gourd with both hands. Ruby cowedly watches in utter silence.

He hands her the gourd.

She takes the slick, gray cabbage-sized sphere into her hands.

WALTER

I think he wants you to eat it.

RUBY

It smells like rotten fish.

The Albino gestures in a way that suggests eating.

WALTER
You don't have a choice.

RUBY
I know.

Ruby raises the gourd to her mouth. She bites into it.

Black ichor drips down the gourd and Ruby's chin. She hastily turns her face away from the foul gourd.

Ruby convulses with overwhelming nausea. Determined not to vomit, Ruby swallows hard and masters her sickness.

The Albino points to the gourd and then to her stomach. He repeats the gesture three times in a row.

RUBY
I have to eat it all?

The Albino pulls himself from the depression in one smooth motion. He takes the lantern and departs.

Walter looks back to Ruby.

WALTER
Are you alright?

RUBY
My arm burns...

Ruby looks at the grey gourd she holds between her hands. She looks at the viscous black fluid that drips from the bite she took from it.

RUBY
(continuing)
I can't eat this.
(beat)
I'll throw up.
(beat)
The smell is making me gag.

She shuts her eyes and looks away from the malodorous vegetable.

The light grows dimmer and dimmer as the albino walks away.

RUBY
(continuing)
I've got to get rid of it, now, or
I'll-

She convulses with a gagging reflex, but stops short of actually vomiting.

She frantically looks around the cave. Her eyes rest on the nearby chasm.

WALTER
Don't throw it down there.

RUBY
I don't want him to find it.

WALTER
Throw it far away - this place is
dark. He won't come across it.

Ruby hurls the gourd into the darkness.

Mildly relieved, she exhales fully and inhales deeply.

The light from the Albino's lamp disappears, leaving the couple in absolute darkness once again.

A low MOAN reverberates in the room.

WALTER
(continuing)
Is that you?

A SNIFFLE reverberates.

RUBY
Yes. I'm sorry.

Ruby SNIFFLES again.

WALTER
Is your arm feeling better?

RUBY
It's numb. My throat is burning
from that stuff he made me eat. I'm
hot.

WALTER
You should lie down.

RUBY

I am.

WALTER

You need to sleep.

RUBY

My throat burns.

CLICK.

CLICK.

CLICK.

CLICK.

SCRAPE.

RUBY

What was that?

WALTER

(worried)

I don't know.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. SCRAPE.

The sounds grow steadily louder. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

CLICK. SCRAPE.

WALTER

(continuing; very
agitated)

It's getting closer.

RUBY

(frantic)

I know, I know.

The sound is loud and sharp. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

SCRAPE. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. SCRAPE. CLICK. CLICK.

CLICK. CLICK. SCRAPE.

RUBY

It's coming towards me.

A dull THUD followed by a moist SPLAT echoes in the cavern.

WALTER

RUBY!

RUBY

It's right beside me.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. SCRAPE.

The sound grows quieter, more distant. CLICK. CLICK.

CLICK. CLICK. SCRAPE. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

SCRAPE.

RUBY

It's leaving.

The sound stops, leaving only heavy silence in the unadulterated black.

The far off lamp light sparkles into view.

WALTER

The albino is coming back.

The light - nearly half a mile away- grows brighter, but the couple still remains in darkness.

RUBY

I'll push him down the goddamn hole this time.

The light slowly draws nearer.

WALTER

I don't think that's a good idea.

RUBY

(hostile)

Why not?

WALTER

If you kill him, we're still trapped here...and there are others.

The light faintly outlines stalagmites and Walter, though Ruby and the depression still lie in darkness.

RUBY

He's not torturing you. He's not forcing you to eat fruit that tastes like diarrhea.

(beat)

It's a lot easier for you to wait than it is for me.

Walter looks empathetically at the dark crater within which Ruby lies. His eyes sparkle with nascent tears.

WALTER

Do whatever you think is right.

The light grows brighter.

The light spills onto the strange prints that lead up to the edge of the depression. The prints are largely either triangular or circular.

Ruby stands up; her shoulders and head lit by the distant light, the rest of her falling off into the crater's shadow.

Walter sees that her face and neck are noticeably swollen and have taken on a slightly yellowish hue. He opens his mouth to say something, but decides against it.

Ruby stares off into the approaching light. The Albino is a hundred yards away.

Walter watches the Albino near the edge of the depression.

Walter and Ruby watch as the approaching light fills the crater.

The grey gourd lies splattered on the floor of the depression, only several feet from where Ruby is chained. Ruby loses her breath momentarily.

WALTER

Get rid of it!

Ruby scampers towards the smashed gourd, but the chain grows taut before she can reach it.

RUBY

He's going to see it!

WALTER

He's here.

The Albino reaches the rim of the depression. His red irises are drawn down to the crushed gourd and it's dripping black innards.

The Albino looks into Ruby's terrified brown eyes. He places the lantern upon the lip of the depression.

The Albino drops into the crater and walks directly towards Ruby.

WALTER
STOP!!! JUST TELL US WHAT YOU
WANT!

Uninterested in Walter's remarks, the Albino walks towards Ruby.

Ruby retreats to the full extent of her chain.

The Albino walks past Ruby towards the gourd. He stands before the smashed gourd, looking down on it.

RUBY
(desperate)
I'll eat it- I'll do whatever you
want me to do...

The Albino leans over the gourd and scoops the gelatinous black innards of the vegetable back in its smashed shell. He picks up the gourd and walks towards Ruby.

Ruby extends her trembling hands to accept the proffered gourd.

She takes the leaking orb in her hands and brings it up to her mouth. She takes a large bite and swallows without chewing.

The Albino watches with unblinking authority.

She takes another large bite and swallows it immediately. She takes another bite.

Her body convulses- she is about to retch.

The Albino places his right hand securely over her mouth. He pinches her nostrils shut with his left thumb and forefinger.

Walter looks away, unable to watch.

Ruby convulses. The Albino holds her jaw shut and her nose closed. Tears pour from Ruby's bright red eyes. She

convulses again.

The Albino stands still, his hands clamped over her mouth and nose.

Ruby convulses again.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. VAST CAVERN - LATER

Complete darkness fills the space.

A low MOAN, soft as the wind, blows through the air.

WALTER
(panicked)
There it is again.

The MOAN gets slightly higher in pitch. The moan stops.

WALTER
(continuing)
Ruby!

RUBY
(slurred speech)
My mother visited me.

Silence.

WALTER
Your mother is dead.

RUBY
Not that mother, a different
mother. The one who lives in the
dark. She crawled out of the hole.
She came to see me.

WALTER
You have a fever. You're
hallucinating or you were dreaming.

RUBY
You don't understand. She told me
why I'm here. She explained it all
to me.

WALTER
What did she say?

RUBY

She told me about our ancestors- a race that, thousands of years ago, mated with humans, merged with humans and became humans...almost.

WALTER

Who are you talking about? These albinos?

RUBY

No. The albinos are the guardians of the old race, the caretakers. We are something else, far greater...

WALTER

This is an elaborate fever dream. The next time you wake up, you'll laugh at this, trust me.

Walter YELLS.

WALTER

(continuing)

Fuck!

(beat)

Something just scratched my face.

I -

Walter makes a GARGLING noise.

RUBY

What's happening?

Walter SCREAMS then spits repeatedly. He COUGHS a couple of times.

WALTER

Something just tried to rip out my tongue.

RUBY

I told her not to do that. She doesn't know you.

A light sparkles in the distance.

WALTER

Shut up about all this shit, I'm
too weak to argue about it.

(beat)

I haven't eaten in at least four
days and I'm freezing.

The light draws nearer.

The stalagmites slowly take on luminance.

The light spills onto the bound, emaciated form of Walter. A
deep gash runs along his left cheek. His head lolls forward
weakly upon his bony neck.

The recent conversation has exhausted him; it takes most of
his strength merely to continue breathing.

Ruby cannot be seen in the dark shadow of the crater.

The Albino comes into view, carrying the lamp.

Walter looks at the Albino.

WALTER

(continuing)

I'm starving to death! I'M
STARVING!!!

The Albino nears the crater; his lantern light spills inside
the dark depression.

Walter is aghast with what he sees.

Ruby lies on her back upon the rocky floor. She has lost all
of her hair and is extremely bloated.

Ruby's mouth is open, but appears to no longer have teeth.
Her eyes are a dark purple hue. Silver hair sprouts from
where her fingernails used to be.

RUBY

Everything is blurry.

The chains about her feet have been snapped; pulled and
twisted chain links lie about the crater.

WALTER

Your chains are broken!

RUBY

I know.

WALTER

Untie me!

Ruby lethargically pushes herself up from the ground.

The Albino reaches the edge of the depression.

Walter sees TWO CRAWLING FORMS follow the Albino at a distance, hardly distinguishable from the shadows. The outline of both forms is human, yet they walk on all fours.

WALTER

(continuing)

He's not alone.

RUBY

I can smell them.

Walter calls to the quadrupedal figures.

WALTER

HEY! I'm starving- give me something to eat.

The Crawlers scatter back into the shadows.

The Albino rests the lantern upon the lip of the crater. He lowers himself into the depression, towards Ruby.

She looks at him with purplish red eyes, from which tears roll down her swollen yellow cheeks.

He stops three feet away from her and looks upon her with cold scrutiny.

ALBINO

Kadlefan kreekaj netlandij yajik.

Ruby looks away, unable to face him.

ALBINO

(continuing)

Kadlefan kreekaj yajik.

She clenches her hands; the silver hair protruding from her fingertips dangles from her fists.

She blindly lunges for the Albino; he evades her easily and

grabs her by the neck. He sends her to the ground.

ALBINO
(continuing)
Kadlefan kreekaj yajik.

Ruby covers her ears with her hands and SCREAMS.

ALBINO
(continuing)
Kadlefan kreekaj yajik.

RUBY
KAJIN KREEJAK, KAJIN KREEJAK!

Ruby stands up and runs towards the chasm.

WALTER
RUBY!

Ruby jumps into the black hole.

Walter watches horrified.

The Albino turns and leaves.

Tears pour down Walter's face; his teeth gnash as he struggles against his bonds.

The Albino climbs out of the depression; he takes the lamp with him.

The light slowly diminishes as the Albino recedes.

WALTER
(continuing)
I don't wanna die!

The light is gone.

CUT TO:

INT. VAST CAVERN - LATER

Darkness.

Silence.

Walter SCREAMS.

WALTER
STOP, STOP, STOP!!!

Walter SCREAMS again.

A flashlight flickers in the distance.

VOICE FROM THE DARK.
RUBY!?!

WALTER
OVER HERE, OVER HERE!!!

The flashlight fixes upon Walter.

WALTER
(continuing)
HELP ME, IT'S BITING ME, IT'S
BITING ME!!!

The flashlight jerkily bounces up and down and grows brighter as its carrier runs towards Walter.

The flashlight illuminates the speedy departure of a Crawler into the recesses of the cave.

VOICE FROM THE DARK
WALTER!

WALTER
Mr. Gleichman?

Gregory Gleichman circumnavigates the massive stalagmites as he beelines towards Walter.

Walter is bleeding profusely from two fresh wounds on his chest; the blood drips down the ropes.

GREGORY
Where's Ruby?

Walter does not know whether or not to tell Gregory what has happened.

Gregory's face had been badly (and repeatedly) scratched; his left hand has two fingers missing- brown bandages staunch the flow of blood.

GREGORY
(continuing; sternly)
What happened to Ruby?

Walter shakes his head as tears fill his eyes.

Gregory walks behind the stalagmite that Walter is tied to.

Gregory unties the knots, quickly yet steadily.

Walter sags forwards as the ropes slacken around him.

Gregory pulls the last of the knots free.

Walter pitches forward into the dirt. Walter clenches his hands to circulate stagnant blood.

Gregory walks over to Walter and kneels at his side.

GREGORY
(continuing)
What did he do to her?

Walter stares up into Gregory Gleichman's unblinking eyes.

WALTER
He made her eat this fruit...this
rotten fruit...

Tears sparkle in Gregory's eyes; he turns his head away from Walter.

WALTER
Her face swelled up, her eyes went
red and then...she...she killed
herself.

Gregory shuts his eyes in an effort to block out the flood of painful emotions.

Walter groggily looks upon the man in silence.

Wiping tears from his eyes, Gregory turns back to face Walter.

GREGORY
Do you think...you can walk?

Walter pushes himself into a sitting position. He looks about dazed.

WALTER
I can't stand yet - I'm too dizzy.
(beat)
I haven't eaten in days.

GREGORY
Weeks. You've been missing for
more than two weeks.

Walter shakes his head in denial.

WALTER
No, I'd be dead by now - I would
have starved...

GREGORY
He didn't feed you?

Walter shakes his head.

WALTER
I should be dead, right?

Gregory looks at Walter, trying to determine the veracity of
what Walter has said.

GREGORY
Let me help you up.

Gregory rests his flashlight upon the floor.

Gregory leans over to Walter and puts his hands beneath
Walter's armpits. He helps Walter to his feet.

Walter stands unsteadily upon his withered legs.

Gregory grabs the flashlight with his left hand; he puts his
right arm around Walter's back for support.

GREGORY
Try to walk.

Gregory takes a step; Walter shakily mirrors the movement.

They walk together in the darkness, preceded by the cone of
light shining from the flashlight.

WALTER
What's happening down here?

Gregory does not answer Walter.

WALTER

I read your journal. Don't say
that it's fiction.

The light ahead catches on a huge stalagmite. Gregory and
Walter walk around it.

WALTER

Your daughter is dead. She was
tortured...

(beat)

Don't you care?

Gregory stares balefully at Walter.

WALTER

You didn't know they would do this?

GREGORY

(shaking his head)

They said that they just wanted to
monitor us, protect our heritage.

WALTER

Until now...

GREGORY

Yes...until now.

Gregory walks alongside Walter in silence.

WALTER

(frustrated)

Why am I here, what has this got to
do with me!?

GREGORY

Why did you feel so compelled to
pursue Ruby? How did you survive
fifteen days with neither food nor
water? Why did they let you live?

WALTER

That isn't an answer!

GREGORY

That is an answer.

Walter shoves away from Gregory and punches him in the
stomach. Gregory doubles over; Walter tumbles onto the
ground, upon his side.

GREGORY

(continuing; gasping)

Stand up. I want to get you out of
here as quickly as possible.

Walter looks up at the tall, sharp-featured man.

GREGORY

(continuing)

Stand up now or find your own way
in the dark.

Walter stands. Gregory leans over and supports him.

The two walk forward in silence.

The light of the flashlight shines upon an enormous wall. An
aperture four feet in diameter is the only point of egress in
the rocky facade.

Gregory shines his light into the aperture; it is the
entrance of a lengthy tunnel.

GREGORY

(continuing)

You will go the rest of the way
alone. Crawl through this
passageway until you come upon an
underground stream. Follow the
current of the stream until you see
the waterfall. Before the fall
there will be a ledge on your left.
Climb up the ledge and walk past
all of the cave openings until you
reach a narrow triangular cave
mouth. Crawl through until you see
daylight.

Walter looks at Gregory in terrified silence.

Gregory hands Walter the flashlight.

WALTER

I can't...

GREGORY

You are part of a race that has
been lost for thousands of years.
You have to survive and find
another one of us and your children
must do the same.

Walter opens his mouth to refuse the proposition, but Gregory turns away from him, into the chill darkness.

WALTER

Where are you going?

Gregory turns back to face Walter.

GREGORY

I've helped the albino for years- I owe him my life, but not the lives of my children.

(beat)

I should have stopped him the night he set fire to my woods.

Gregory walks away from Walter, away from the light and away from the tunnel.

Walter looks at the aperture in the wall and then back to his quickly departing companion.

WALTER

I can't do this!

Gregory Gleichman walks beyond the range of Walter's flashlight and is enveloped by darkness.

Walter walks over to the tunnel entrance.

He inspects the opening with his flashlight.

The tunnel winds away into impenetrable darkness.

Walter feels that he has no choice but to follow Gregory's instructions.

He climbs in, pointing the flashlight ahead of him.

INT. TUNNEL - SAME

Walter crawls slowly upon the rocky floor of the narrow crawl space. He holds the flashlight in his mouth as he crawls. His bare knees, hands, and feet are in constant danger of being cut by the irregular protrusion of stone in the passage.

He crawls forward, his light stabbing forward into the gradual incline of the passage.

The cap of his bare knee catches on a jagged rock.

The flashlight drops from Walter's mouth as he YELLS.

Without looking at the wound, Walter shoves the flashlight in his mouth and continues forward.

The passage narrows slightly and bends to the right.

Walter cautiously rounds the corner.

Walter hears a SCREAM echo in the distance. He hurries his crawl and does not look back.

Walter continues on; the passage widens slightly. The floor of the passage is covered with an accumulation of water, debris, and grime.

Without hesitation, Walter SPLASHES forward into the water. He GRUNTS and winces as he submerges his lacerated knee into the filthy pool.

Walter crawls. His light is refracted and reflected on the dark, oily surface of the water.

Walter GRUNTS loudly; he rips the flashlight from his mouth with his left hand.

Walter leans against the wall of the passage for support and raises his right hand from the water.

A small gray crab has clamped a pincer upon Walter's right index finger.

He swings his hand into the wall. CRACK. He takes the rear end of the flashlight and brings it down heavily upon the gray body of the crab.

CRUNCH. Walter, back against the passage wall, lifts his right hand in front of the flashlight.

The squashed crab is still clamped to his right index finger, directly below the knuckle.

Walter's fingertip is blue; his circulation has been cut off. He pulls the pincer from his finger; the crab drops lifeless into the water. Walter bends the finger, returning the flow of blood.

He continues to crawl forward, his eyes warily searching the opaque water for more unfriendly crustaceans.

The water rises past his elbows as he crawls onwards. He sloshes through the water on hands and knees.

He hears something; he pauses to listen.

He hears the sound of running water in the distance.

Walter hastily crawls towards the sound, directly ahead of him.

INT. UNDERGROUND RIVER - SAME

An enormous river runs through the rocks, illuminated dimly by sunlight which pierces through gaps in the ceiling above.

The tiny sparkle of Walter's flashlight shines within a hole in the cavern wall nearly one hundred feet above the river.

Walter reaches the end of his passageway and looks down at the river below him.

He sinks back within the passage.

He hears a sound...a low MOAN. Then SOBBING.

Walter shines his light back into the cave.

The SOBBING continues. Walter angles the flashlight in many directions, but sees nothing.

The SOBBING grows louder.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. SCRAPE.

VOICE FROM THE DARK

Walter...

Walter jumps from the passageway into the river.

Walter SPLASHES into the river a hundred feet below.

He surfaces a moment later, inhaling deeply. He looks up at the passageway from which he just dropped.

A black shape crawls out of the hole; it crawls on arms and legs down the sheer, vertical surface of the cavern which is a honeycomb of cave openings and niches.

Walter swims with the tide, putting distance between himself and his assailant.

The Crawler makes its way along the cavern wall, towards Walter.

Walter swims frantically away, but the crawler gains on him quickly.

The Crawler is now within ten feet of Walter. It passes through a patch of daylight.

It is Ruby; her hairless head hangs limply on her elongated neck; silver hair sprouts from her fingertips, purple bruises cover much of her yellow skin. Her eyes are black.

Walter turns and SPLASHES away as quickly as he can.

RUBY SHRIEKS.

Walter keeps his distance, but, treading water, turns to look at her.

Ruby darts at Walter, tapping upon some hidden reservoir of energy. She races across the surface of the river like a waterbug.

Walter raises his hands in front of his face in feeble defense when Ruby halts directly in front of him. She tilts her head back on her long neck and a grey substance sprays from two slits in her neck; hundreds of grey beetles cover Walters upraised hands and the exposed parts of his face.

Terrified, he plunges underwater, wiping the bugs from his face, spitting them from his mouth. Ruby's hands clasp his neck and she lifts him above the surface. The fine silver hairs sprouting from her fingers encircle his neck and face, and stiffen like rigid wires.

Walter stares in Ruby's completely opaque eyes. The slits in her neck open and Walter terrified, shuts his eyes.

WALTER
RUBY! PLEASE!

Ruby stares at Walter for a long moment, hesitating to proceed. A few beetles crawl out of the slits in her neck.

WALTER
(Quietly)
Please...

Ruby releases Walter and MOANS.

RUBY
(Wheezing)
The fruit, it's making me crazy...I
don't think I'll survive the change
into the lost form.

Ruby GASPS, painfully pulling air through her failing
respiratory system, passed her swollen, purple tongue. Saliva
runs from her mouth and inky tears pour from her eyes.

WALTER
Is there any way I can help?

RUBY
No.
(gasping)
It's too late...

Ruby laboriously draws air through her congested nasal
passages, turns around and clambers up the wall.

She stops for a brief moment, looks back at Walter and then
continues up and away, into the heavy dripping darkness.

WALTER
(softly, to himself)
Ruby...

Walter stares on, drained and dismayed as the steady current
buoys him downriver.

He turns and looks directly ahead of him; the sound of
POUNDING WATER comes from up ahead.

It is the waterfall.

Walter looks to his left; a small ledge juts from the cavern
side. Hewn steps lead up and away from the ledge into the
darkness above.

Walter swims for the ledge.

Walter reaches up towards the rock that juts out from the
cavern wall, above the water. He grabs a protruding stone
with his right hand.

While hanging from the rock with his right hand, Walter
raises his left to a small crevasse above him.

He strains tremendously as he pulls himself out of the water.

His feet scramble for support below him. He finds something to stand on just beneath the surface of the water.

Walter reaches up to the edge of the rock two feet above. He pulls himself onto the flat surface and collapses.

INT. TUNNEL - LATER

Walter lies asleep on his stomach at the foot of the hewn stairs. The sound of the nearby waterfall echoes loudly in the cavern.

He stirs from his slumber.

Walter shakily stands; he carefully walks up the twenty stone stairs. He then walks along the narrow ledge, higher and higher, away from the water.

He walks by a circular hole in the wall about three feet in diameter.

He passes it by.

Another opening presents itself, this one narrower and rectangular.

He continues walking.

He passes by several more openings until he comes upon one that is roughly the shape of a triangle.

It is less than two feet wide.

Walter kneels down and looks inside. The daylight that sparkles through the fissures two hundred feet above hardly penetrates the small tunnel.

Walter crawls inside, his shoulders rubbing along the angled sides around him.

INT. THE NARROW CAVE - SAME

Walter slithers and shimmies up the tunnel- he hardly has enough room to draw breaths.

He pushes onward and up the ascending tunnel in a painfully slow manner. Walter grasps rocks and niches when he has enough space to maneuver his arms; he kicks and thrashes when he does not.

Small gray roaches scurry from cracks in the tunnel as he approaches. They squeeze past Walter in the narrow space between his bare body and the tunnel surface.

Rocks score, scratch and scrape along his exposed bare back.

An orange light shines upon his face from further up the tunnel. He is briefly blinded, but his pace does not slacken.

He pushes onward and upward into the light above.

Walter braces himself against the tunnel walls and shimmies up, digging his fingers and toes into the craggy surface of stone.

EXT. WOODED DELL - SAME (TWILIGHT)

Walter climbs out of a small triangular cave mouth, which lies within a small wooded dell.

Walter shivers, seemingly realizing how cold it is for the first time in hours.

He sees a path that zigzags out of the heavily-forested dell.

Walter, clutching himself for warmth, walks upon the path.

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

Walter's face and chest are red with exposure as he walks along the path in the moonlit night.

He rubs his face in an effort to generate some heat.

He hears the faint hum and swish of cars driving in the distance.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Walter stands in the middle of the road.

A lone car's headlights shine on him from a distance.

Walter waves his hands; the driver of the car HONKS his horn.

Walter continues to wave his outstretched hands as if he were waving in an airplane; the driver HONKS repeatedly.

Walter darts off of the road.

The car, over one hundred yards away, continues forward without slowing its speed.

Walter returns from the woods dragging a fallen pine tree across the pavement, blocking off the road completely.

The driver continues to HONK, but slows down when the headlights illuminate the dead pine barricade.

Walter approaches the blue economy vehicle.

A WOMAN, heavysset, late forties, steps from behind the wheel.

WOMAN
Are you alright?

WALTER
I need a ride to the hospital.

INT. BLUE CAR - LATER

Walter sits in the passenger seat, looking out at the dark road ahead of them.

WOMAN
Who did this to you?

WALTER
I don't know.

WOMAN
I think you should call the police.
You're really beat up.

WALTER
I'd rather leave the whole thing
behind me as quickly as possible-
forget it ever happened.

WOMAN
But whoever did this to you might
do it again, to somebody else.

WALTER
I can't worry about everyone- I've
got enough to deal with.

The Woman is displeased with Walter's answer but she decides not to argue her point any further.

Walter rests his head upon the seat's cushioned headrest and

shuts his eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Walter lies awake in a hospital bed, in a clean private room. He stares at the overhead fluorescent bulbs which buzz as they emit a greenish-blue light.

Walter has bandages covering the lacerations on his face and arms. He wears new turquoise cotton pajamas that the hospital has provided for him. Near the bed lies a stand with a clock, a glass of water and a telephone.

Walter picks up the receiver with his left hand and begins dialing with his right. He brings the receiver to his ear.

As the phone RINGS he stares through the two nearby windows of his third floor room. The windows open out onto the pond and small park that (during the day) serve as a visiting/recreational area, but now stand still and vacant in the moonlight.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hello?

WALTER

Jason, it's me.

JASON (O.S.)

Walter?

WALTER

Yeah.

Beat.

JASON

We were supposed to go canoeing this weekend, remember? I wound up going with Anthony.

WALTER

How did that go?

JASON (O.S.)

He's an idiot - you know how it went! Paddle fights...splashing wars - he tipped us twice in the first hour. We were diving for sunken beers the whole day.

Walter smiles.

WALTER

I'd rather have been there than in the hospital.

JASON (O.S.)

You're in the hospital?!

WALTER

I took a tumble into some trees on the slope. I'll be out in a couple of days.

JASON (O.S.)

I hope you're writhing in agony. Call and let me know exactly when you're coming in - I'll pick you and Ruby up at the airport.

Walter blanches briefly upon hearing Ruby's name.

WALTER

She's not coming back with me.

JASON (O.S.)

She dump you?

Walter hesitates to answer the question.

WALTER

No. She's leaving school.

JASON (O.S.)

Are you going to stay together?

Tears sparkle in Walter's eyes. He takes a deep breath before answering.

WALTER

Probably not.

JASON (O.S.)

That long distance relationship stuff sucks...or so I've been told. I think it's better to end it now.

Walter's morbid demeanor shows his thoughts are elsewhere.

WALTER

Yeah.

(beat)

(MORE)

WALTER (cont'd)
I'm really tired Jason, I need to
get some sleep. Tell Anthony I
said hello.

JASON (O.S.)
Alright. Feel better.

WALTER
Thanks. Bye.

JASON (O.S.)
Bye.

Walter hangs up the phone with a tremulous hand.

His eyes sparkle as he looks through the window onto the
empty park and pond outside.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLIEST DAWN

The dark blue light of early dawn shines through the open
windows, into the hospital room, giving the room a glowing
quality.

Walter lies asleep in his metal-railed bed, the sheets and
blanket twisted about him, evidence of a restless and
uncomfortable night of sleeping.

Walter opens his eyes and looks around the empty room.

He raises his hand to his mouth and wipes his lips. His hand
comes away smeared with blood.

He pulls the entwined sheets from around his turquoise
pajamas and rests his sock-covered feet upon the linoleum-
tiled floor.

He stands up and limps toward the small bathroom at the other
side of the room.

INT. HOSPITAL BATHROOM - SAME

He walks into the small bathroom, which is furnished with a
toilet, sink, and mirror. He turns on the light.

He shuts the door behind him.

Walter looks at his bandaged and drawn face in the mirror. He
opens his mouth.

He lifts up his tongue. Two black growths the size of peanuts lie in the flesh beneath his tongue. Tears sparkle in Walter's eyes.

He gently pokes one of the tumorous marks with his index finger. He flinches and jerks his hand away from the sensitive spot. Tears begin to stream down his face.

Walter shuts his mouth, and wipes away the tears.

He turns around and opens the door.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME

Walter walks into the room.

A gray gourd lies on the bed.

Walter's stomach sinks.

Nine albinos stand in front of the room's shut door, staring at Walter.

The foremost albino wears a tattered robe stained with purple splotches; he points to the gourd, resting upon the bed. The albinos' eyes stare intently upon Walter - eighteen red circles aglow in the blue-illuminated room. Walter shakes his head in obstinate refusal.

WALTER

No.

Walter turns and runs towards the window. Blood drains from his face as he sees what looms outside.

Silhouetted against the grainy, blue haze of the early morning sky, stands a tall humanoid-shaped being with a disproportionately long neck and two glowing, violet eyes. The being's manifold arms terminate in wicked, barbed pincers. Steam rises from numerous orifices along its shadow-enshrouded body. It WAILS, the sound akin to that of ten women SHRIEKING in unison.

His face pale with fear, Walter turns back to face the albinos; they are slowly closing in on him.

Walter stares balefully at the albinos as he picks up the gourd.

The robed albino raises his pale, mottled hand, and motions for his peers to halt.

Narrowing his eyes in hateful determination, Walter turns around and hurls the gourd at the unseen face of the beast outside (upon which his own face is reflected in the window), SHATTERING the immense pane of glass.

The albinos rush Walter.

Walter darts towards the broken window, the pane of which holds innumerable shards of jagged glass.

Walter slams his left wrist onto a shard of glass jutting from the window frame. He rakes his wrist across the glass; a gout of blood sprays from the laceration.

He then punctures the veins in his right wrist on another protruding shard. He tears open the skin with a jagged movement.

Walter turns to face the Albinos' glowing red eyes. He drops to his knees as blood pours from his wrists in pulsing streams.

Walter falls face first onto the cold blue linoleum.

The Albinos SCREAM in absolute horror.

CUT TO BLACK:

The end.